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THE WATERCOLOR CLUB EXHIBITION.

LITTLE need be said of the show now on at the Fine Arts Building. It is poor, almost there might be added the qualifying: awfully. The committee must have been at hard odds to cover the walls. To admit palpably student sketches like Nos. 90, 91, 126, 239, 265, 343, and the bad work that hangs in the Northwest room (always that same storm corner for the Chamber of Horrors here as it was in the old Academy), is asking the kind indulgence of the public that pay its quarters, with a vengeance. To describe the average as fair would be an admission that some strikingly good work offsets the positively bad abortions here shown. This admission cannot be made. The best is but fair, the worst is—and, mind you, I saw the show on Saturday afternoon, one of the most glorious days of this beautiful autumn, and after a delicious luncheon at the Arts Club.

It is not difficult to pick out the best. While Childe Hassam is not up to his average in No. 6, "The Park at St. Cloud," he redeems himself in 103, "The Shade of the Cliff." W. C. Ostrander's work, Nos. 20 and 112, is a surprise, showing the good results of his summer studies with Murphy. The little marines by Howard Russell Butler are delightful. The Providence artist, S. R. Burleigh, caught Nature's mood perfectly. Mrs. Coman demonstrates her title to a high place among the women artists—who, by the way, have surpassed their brethren in touching the extremes of good and bad in the collection. Ben Foster's "A Night Comes On," No. 13, is a sincere portrayal of the hour when the falling day in silence withdraws behind the western hills, the fires of light are quenched, and peaceful rest brings to the toiler release. George McCord's "Afternoon, Coast of Maine," No. 142, possesses a color scheme somewhat unusual to the artist, but highly successful.

La Farge is quite up to his standard; he does seem to have a good many leaves in the portfolio of his Eastern travels. Gedney Bunce's "Venice," No. 85, must be a replica, it is so familiar. C. Morgan McIlhenny grows tiresome with the same sheep flock among the trees, executed in the same manner, soft and pleasing forsooth, but hardly progressive. Apropos of sheep flocks, that shepherd and his lonely dog, in No. 317, have a big job in caring for over seventy of their woolly charges, not counting the boulders that look like sheep.

Good work again is found in Charles Warren Eaton's pastels of Niagara, especially No. 111. L. Crapo Smith is fair in No. 254, "Grace and Lorne," except that the draping of the gown over the knee is confusing—one wonders where the other foot is or ought to be. The landscapes of Bendelari-Markoe, Hulbert, Traver, Earle, Palmer and Fidler have good qualities. Jules Guerin, individual as ever, sends some of the best sheets of the show in Nos. 4, 26, 86. The six Dodge Macknight's are loud enough to cry out, but should not be heard. Granville Smith's "Blossom Time," No. 327, is tucked away in a dark corner, and with its grace and decorative softness does the martyr act—there must be some good stuff in the back rooms. Albert Herter's "Patricia," No. 36, is too assertive in its red key and reminds us of his last season's work. Of the miniatures, those by Jean W. Lucas, Alice T. Searle, Ellen W. Ahrens and Mary Agnes Pomeroy are the best. There are other numbers that might be mentioned both for good and bad points, but this will suffice. Still, I cannot omit noting the critique which appeared in the Herald. Said the fashion editor: "The pictures in the principal gallery have been happily arranged so that the blues and purples are at one end, and the tone pictures at the other. Among the latter is a fine example of Albert Herter's art, 'Patricia,' a young woman in a red costume. It is a vigorous piece of work." The dramatic and music reporter who usually does the art shows for our noted contemporary must have been on duty at the Jeffreys-Sharkey fight.

Communication.

162 East Forty-eighth Street, New York.

To the Editor of THE COLLECTOR AND ART CRITIC.

Sir:—The part of a chapter on the use of bitumen which is embodied in my work on "The Science of Modern Painting," deals especially with the early English school, and among the names mentioned is that of George Moreland, on the authority of his father-in-law, James Ward, with a full list of his colors, including bitumen or asphaltum.

Several times lately I have seen it stated in different quarters, even to the extent of expert testimony, that Moreland absolutely and positively did not use bitumen, and that a work showing signs of its use might be certainly pronounced a fraud, and a certificate given to that effect, stamped and sealed.

How much I wish I could agree with this! But it is only the increasing admiration for this gifted man's work, brought about by the importation of better examples by such men as Mr. Blakeslee and others, that I wish to contradict and possibly show the error of their expert testimony. Many of Moreland's best works are to-day bubbling or gapping with fissures; a reminder of the use and abuse of bitumen, and even those works that are in a perfect condition show its use reduced to a scientific application.

That Moreland, the painter of peasants and domestic animals, who

was no doubt as much the forerunner of Millet and others of the French school as was Constable, used bitumen is now well established.

It is also a well-known fact that the use of bitumen was not a supposed revival "brought down from the mountains," as Mr. Vibert has it in his "Science of Painting," but an abuse of a well-known pigment or varnish, and was handed down by Van Eyck, as surely as was verdegis.

Sir Charles Eastlake says on good authority that "all the early Flemish and German artists used it, and Rembrandt and all the little Dutchmen found it of great value in the preparation of the light and shade before actual color was used."

So much for bitumen. How many artists use it to-day?

Truly yours,

ARTHUR DAWSON.

THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION, ART CLUB, PHILADELPHIA.

THE catalogued collection, numbering 235 exhibits, may collectively be termed a fair show. Certainly it is not overburdened with the rare and good things, and generally as one makes the critical inspection, it becomes painfully evident that many have been retrograded (so far as their work is concerned) from the better qualities and conditions governing their previous efforts.

The *genre* is in many cases an affliction, in which the artist makes the attempt to abuse his material by rendering all the cheap flashiness of the chromo-litho, wherein high coloring and impossible conditions do duty for art. Fortunately, however, the landscapist is in evidence, and this may be accepted in the rôle of the rescuing party, for it serves to relieve the show from its mediocre environment.

Paul Dougherty contributes a *potpourri* of green stuff, under the title of "The Pool in the Woods." Reversed it might have passed as a mess of bad salad—even a bad cabbage well painted may claim to be acceptable under the mantle of art, but this, as an expression of poetical feeling and artistic rendering, is as nauseating to the healthy mind as raw liver and onions to the stomach disturbed. "Murder will out" is proved by the finding of "Juanita," this sweet Spanish maid, made dear to all by Mrs. Henry Norton. Juanita is here dead, having died insane, her hair garlanded with poppies and her bust draped in white, "pinked" with green, while the face still bears the maniacal expression, the only triumph left to the insane dead—and this is the work of Maria Brooks. In desperation and with relief my tired eyes feast upon the admirable qualities depicted in J. Francis Murphy's "Morning," a landscape with the sweet note of the thrush, thoughtful, full of expression, mellow from the atmospheric qualities and fine tone. His "After the Frosts" is crisp and refreshing in the very treatment of the prismatic qualities which glint the atmosphere. Their presence relieves the awful strain made by the acceptance of such work as shown by James G. Tyler in "The Equinoctial Gale," wherein the massive foam thrown up against the rocks proves to be of the self-same value with a little difference in color. Hard and massive one might say and still be very lenient.

Painted evidently under the glare of a limelight, "Composing the Letter," by Harry Roseland, is another illustration of bad drawing and false values. The old negro is writing and the negress in close juxtaposition to his face gives light, while her right arm is seen at his back extending some ten inches beyond its sphere, with a hand shaped and sized like the claw of the crow. "A Colored Seerss," by the same, is fairly well drawn and might have been made interesting. The high key and prominence of the foreground, hardly warrants its acceptance as a work of art. "An April Day" and "Evening," by George Inness, Jr., betrays a feeling of indifference to the wholesome teachings of the father. The son to-day cannot usurp the sentiment expressed for the latter, nor foist upon the public an illiterate daub, tagged with the legend: "Buy, for my father was great." "Grooming the Horse," a small canvas, is his best and the only one that presents any claim for recognition. McCord, in his "Freshening Breeze" and his "Seventh Wave," lends the strength of his name in the vigor of his work, but a more admirable introduction is Jules Guerin's "Return of the Flock." This is charming in *motif*, so relieved from any straining after-effect that it downs by its simplicity the very pretentiousness of its companions, "Portrait of a Lady," by George W. Pettit, a local man, and an abortionist; and Clifford Grayson's spleenic landscape and portrait. Quaker City atmosphere may be taken as bad, but it must indeed be bad to cause such a congestion of *technique*. Fresh arrivals from Paris are able masters of the brush, judged by the sample work they bring back. A few months' residence, however, and they complain of a mental dyspepsia, an inability to paint "any more." It's so often the case, I wonder what it is?

"Dawn in Mid-Ocean," by Henry B. Snell, is skied and badly so. There are some admirable qualities in it, yet withal it frowns upon you because the sweet light of dawn is not yet born; it is the lingering labor before the birth.

For a good, precise canvas, commend me to W. B. Van Ingen's "Landscape;" it is very pretty and sweet. Last year, clever Wm.